Strawberry Shortcake™
Gymnastics Fun
SWEET STICKERS INSIDE!

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Strawberry Shortcake™

Gymnastics Fun

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One morning at the Berry Café, Strawberry Shortcake and her friends were about to eat some tasty strawberry-topped waffles when Plum Pudding burst through the front door.

"Girls . . . so excited . . . I can't . . . never believe . . . whoa!" she said breathlessly. She put her hand to her chest and dropped into a chair.

The girls laughed at their friend's enthusiasm. "Why are you so berry excited?" asked Strawberry.

Plum explained that a gymnastics coach named Misty Flutterbug had visited her at her dance studio earlier. Coach Misty had been a famous gymnast. Years ago, she won three gold medals in the Berry Big City Games.

"She wants to use my dance studio for a two-week gymnastics camp," Plum said. "I hope you'll sign up with me!"

The other girls agreed that gymnastics sounded like a lot of fun. They couldn't wait to begin!

The next day the girls gathered at Sweet Beats Studio for the first day of gymnastics camp. They wore their hair in ponytails and dressed in cute, colorful leotards.

Coach Misty told the girls more about the sport. She said good gymnasts were strong, flexible, and graceful.

"So are dancers," Plum thought. "I'll bet this means I'll be good at gymnastics."

"But the most important quality is having the courage to try new things," the coach finished.

Coach Misty began the class with some warm-up exercises. First they ran a few laps. Then they did shoulder rolls and wrist circles. Next they did leg and arm stretches. Finally they did splits and bridges. Now they were ready to begin learning skills on the equipment!

They started with the uneven bars. Coach Misty explained how to swing on the top bar. "I'll spot you," she told them. "Spotting means that I'll stand here and assist you in learning the skill."

She helped them while they practiced swinging on the bars. After just a few tries, Strawberry and Raspberry were both able to swing on their own.

"Berry good!" said the coach. "Who would like to try next?"

Plum stepped forward. "I would!" she said eagerly.

Plum gave it a few tries, but she wasn't able to keep swinging by herself. She needed Coach Misty's help each time.

"You'll learn to do it on your own soon enough," the coach kindly told Plum.

The balance beam came next. Lemon Meringue and Cherry Jam climbed up onto it. The coach instructed them how to hold their arms out and walk. The girls moved smoothly to the end of the beam. They grinned and bowed before hopping off.

"Nicely done," Coach Misty said.

"Can I go?" asked Plum. She jumped up onto the beam, wobbled, and fell off the other side. She tried a second time, only to fall again.

The third time she got on, Coach Misty held Plum's hand and helped her walk across. "There you go! You can do it," she said. But Plum looked upset as she jumped down.

"Let's move on to the vault," suggested Coach Misty. The girls were thrilled when the former gymnast demonstrated a beautiful vault with a double twist. "Someday you'll learn to do that," she said as the girls clapped.

Orange Blossom and Blueberry Muffin volunteered to try the vault. The coach spotted the girls as they tried front handsprings. "Excellent!" she exclaimed as Orange and Blueberry performed them perfectly.

"My turn!" said Plum. She ran fast and hit the springboard hard. Unfortunately, she landed in a sitting position on the mat.

"I'm sure next time you'll stick your landing," said Coach Misty. "That's what we call it when we land on our feet."

Even though the coach was encouraging, Plum was disappointed with her performance. She got up and walked away. Her friends exchanged worried looks as Strawberry hurried after her.

Strawberry found Plum leaning against the ballet barre in one of the dance rooms. Plum was looking at herself in the long mirror. Her face was very sad.

"Plum, what's wrong?" asked Strawberry.

"I thought I would be good at gymnastics since I'm a dancer," confessed Plum. "But it's not easy—at least not for me."

"Remember what Coach Misty said?" Strawberry said gently. "You need to have the courage to try new things. You're the best dancer in Berry Bitty City because you work hard to learn different moves and then practice them until they're perfect."

"You're right, Strawberry. Just because gymnastics is harder than I expected doesn't mean I should give up so easily. I'll go back out and try again," Plum said.

When the girls got back, Coach Misty was teaching everyone a simple floor routine. "Would you like to go first?" She smiled at Plum.

Plum nodded and took her place on the floor.

Everyone watched as she performed the routine exactly as the coach had. Plum even added her own touch at the end—a lovely *arabesque.*

Plum's friends ran over and surrounded her with hugs. "That was beautiful! We knew you could do it!" they all cheered at the same time.

"See how much fun it can be to try new things?" Strawberry said.

"Yes!" Plum replied. "And it's even better when I try them with my berry best friends."

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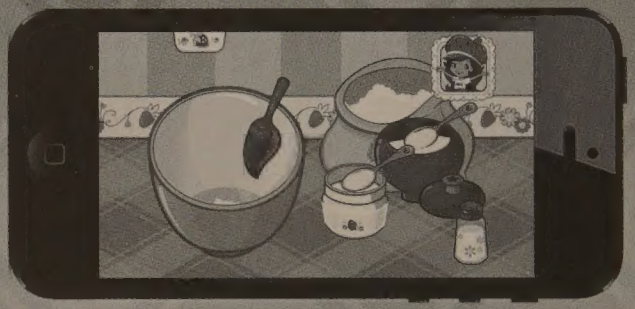

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Strawberry Shortcake and her friends are berry excited to try something new: gymnastics! A coach from Berry Big City has come to town to teach a gymnastics camp. Plum Pudding thinks she's sure to be a great gymnast—after all, she knows more about dance than anyone else. But it turns out that gymnastics isn't so easy for Plum. Can Strawberry convince her friend to give gymnastics another chance?

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